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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 000493

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [LA](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [TH](#) [USEU](#) [BRUSSELS](#)

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO EC ON HMONG CHILDREN

REF: A. SECSTATE 19444

[B](#). VIENTIANE 00168

Classified By: PRM OFFICER MARC MEZNAR FOR REASONS 1.4 (B & D)

[1](#)1. (SBU) PRM Assistant delivered reftel A. talking points and met with the European Commission's, South East Asia Administrator at DG RELEX, Ulla Olsson, on February 9. Olsson admitted that she had only become aware of the situation concerning the Hmong children about a month ago. She indicated that there has been much activity on the part of the French Embassy in Vientiane since the unfolding of the situation and that the Austrian Presidency was relying on the existing European presence in Vientiane to take action since they have no presence in the country. The French have taken a "soft" approach in their dealings with the Laotian government on this issue since they are concerned about the potential for a negative reaction. They want to keep the dialogue opened until the children are found.

[1](#)2. (C) Olsson indicated that the Laotian government officials have come back to the French with the response that they don't know exactly where the Hmong children are located at this time but once they are found they are willing to allow access. She indicated that this situation is difficult because the Hmong children lack official identity documents. She was in agreement that the international community should be allowed access to ensure the health and safety of the Hmong children pending resolution of their status. She also indicated that she had heard through her channels that there was an offer from the U.S. Embassy in Vientiane to shelter the children once they are found.

[1](#)3. (C) Olsson stated that the EU is concerned about the situation. She informed me that she anticipated a EU Troika demarche to Thailand would be released by the Council as early as Friday, February 10. This demarche is an attempt to find out why the Thai government deported the Hmong children to Laos and to open a dialogue to find a solution. Reftel B. confirms that EU demarches were, in fact, delivered to both Bangkok and Vientiane on February 10.

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